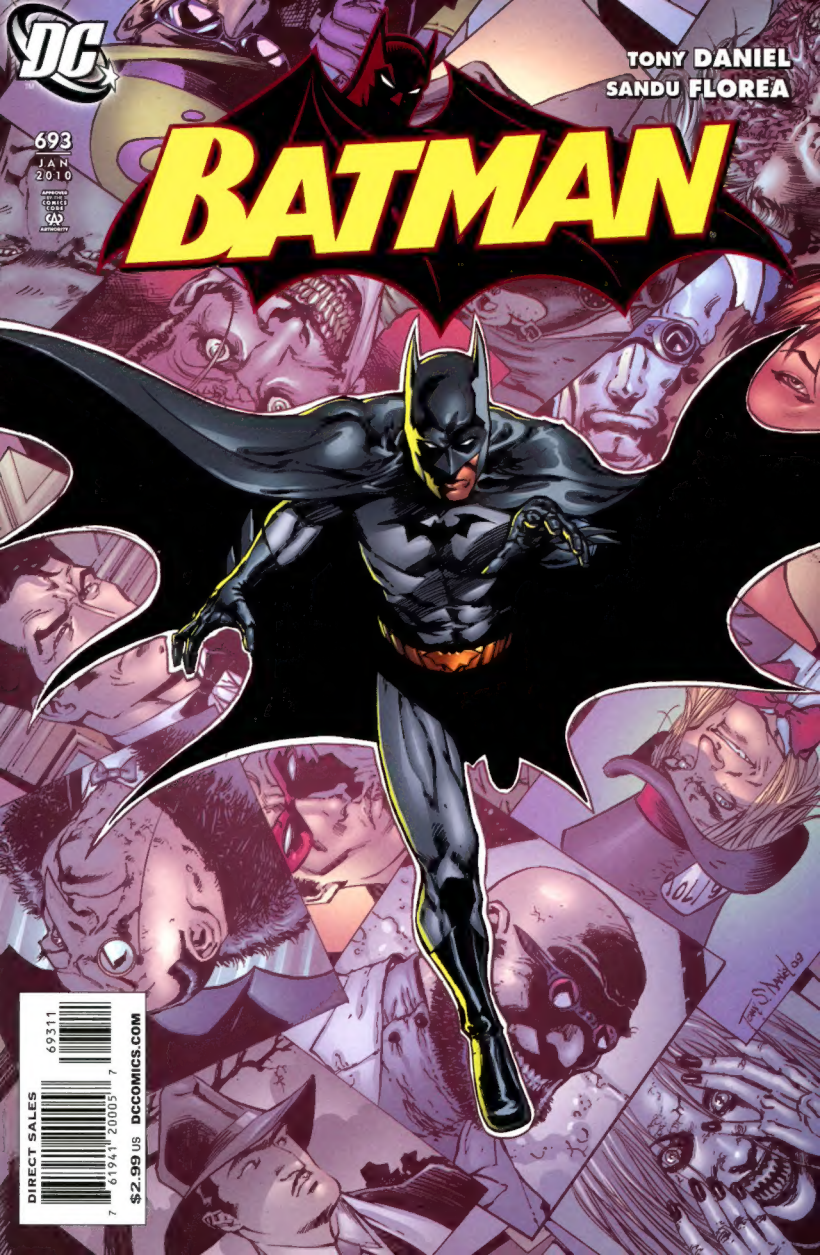
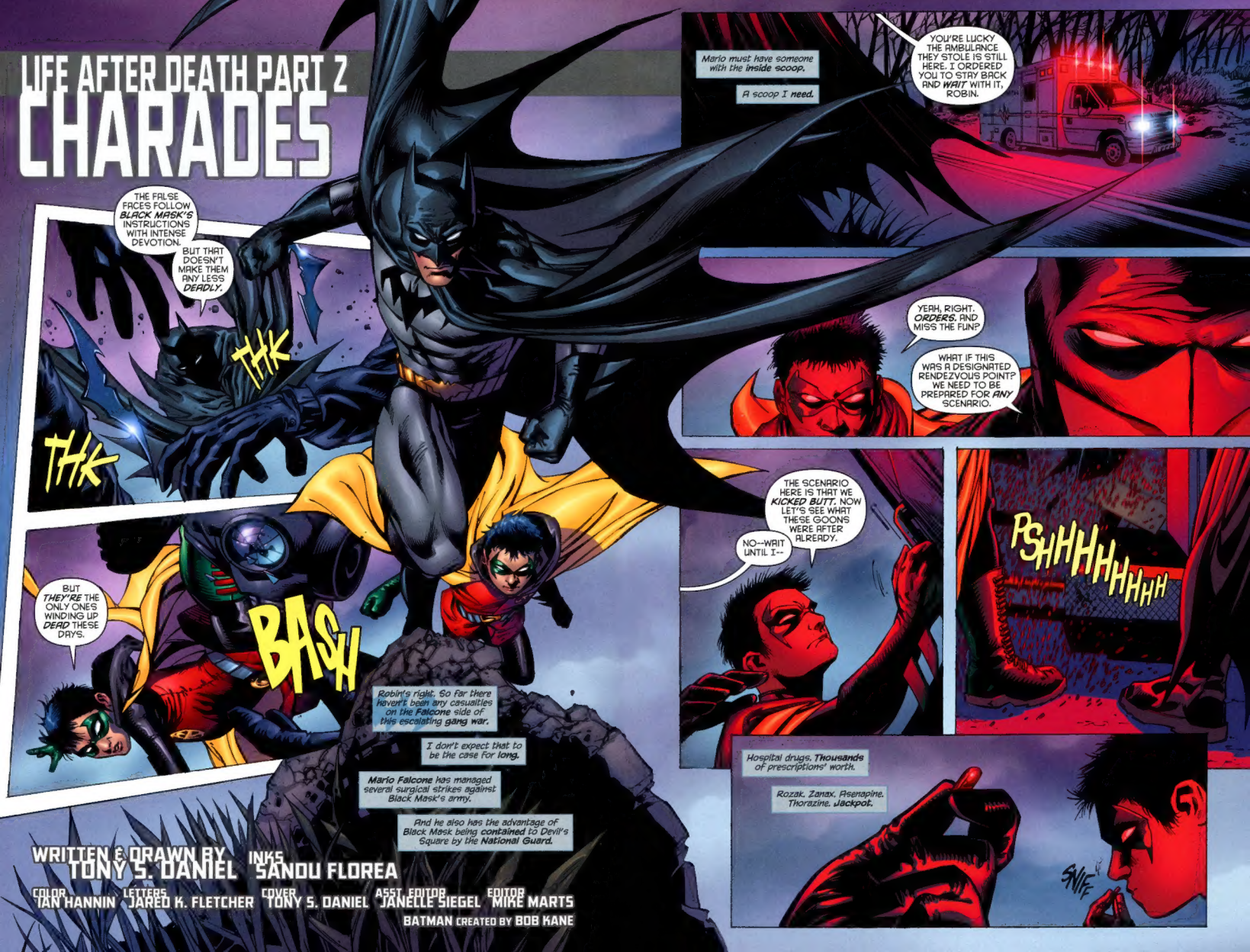
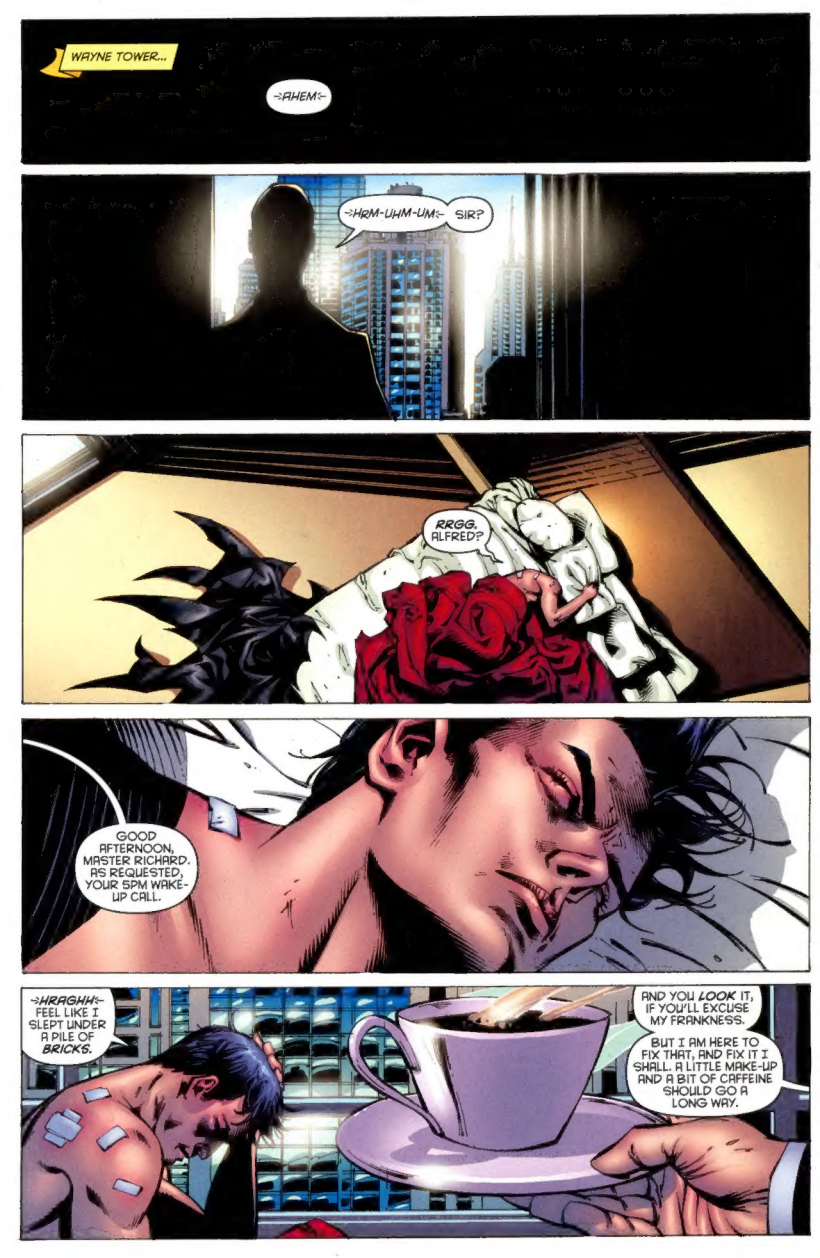

DC
TONY DANIEL
SANDU FLOREA
693
JAN
2010
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
BATMAN
DIRECT SALES
69311
7 61941 20005 7
$2.99 US
DCCOMICS.COM

GOTHAM CITY...
We caught these False Faces three miles from their home base in Devil's Square.
THUK
CHUK
And this time totally by chance.
They'd robbed the receiving room at St. Michael's Hospital in the Pullman district--just where Robin and I happened to be--
--examining the fresh bodies of a few of their buddies in the morgue.
THUNK
They didn't get far.
BEHIND YOU, ROBIN.
POOM
POOM
POOM
YOU WERE RIGHT--THEIR MINDS ARE MUSH. BRAIN-WASHED.
TOO BAD THERE AREN'T MORE OF THESE DEADHEADS. I LIKE THE PRACTICE.
CRAK


LIFE AFTER DEATH PART 2
CHARADES
THE FALSE FACES FOLLOW BLACK MASK'S INSTRUCTIONS WITH INTENSE DEVOTION.
BUT THAT DOESN'T MAKE THEM ANY LESS DEADLY.
THK
THK
BUT THEY'RE THE ONLY ONES WINDING UP DEAD THESE DAYS.
BASH
Robin's right. So far there haven't been any casualties on the Falcone side of this escalating gang war.
I don't expect that to be the case for long.
Mario Falcone has managed several surgical strikes against Black Mask's army.
And he also has the advantage of Black Mask being contained to Devil's Square by the National Guard.
Mario must have someone with the inside scoop.
A scoop I need.
YOU'RE LUCKY THE AMBULANCE THEY STOLE IS STILL HERE. I ORDERED YOU TO STAY BACK AND WAIT WITH IT, ROBIN.
YEAH, RIGHT. ORDERS. AND MISS THE FUN?
WHAT IF THIS WAS A DESIGNATED RENDEZVOUS POINT? WE NEED TO BE PREPARED FOR ANY SCENARIO.
THE SCENARIO HERE IS THAT WE KICKED BUTT. NOW LET'S SEE WHAT THESE GOONS WERE AFTER ALREADY.
NO--WAIT UNTIL I--
PSHHHHHHHHH
Hospital drugs. Thousands of prescriptions' worth.
Rozak. Zanax. Asenapine. Thorazine. Jackpot.
SNIFF
WRITTEN & DRAWN BY TONY S. DANIEL
INKS SANDU FLOREA
COLOR IAN HANNIN
LETTERS JARED K. FLETCHER
COVER TONY S. DANIEL
ASST. EDITOR JANELLE SIEGEL
EDITOR MIKE MARTS
BATMAN CREATED BY BOB KANE

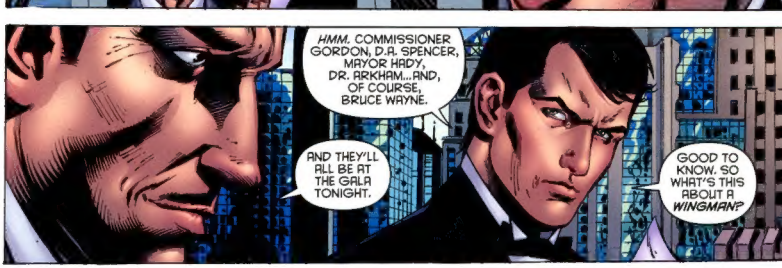

WAYNE TOWER...
~AHEM~
~HRM-UHM-UM~
SIR?
RRGG.
ALFRED?
GOOD AFTERNOON, MASTER RICHARD. AS REQUESTED, YOUR 5PM WAKE-UP CALL.
~HRAGHH~
FEEL LIKE I SLEPT UNDER A PILE OF BRICKS.
AND YOU LOOK IT, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE MY FRANKNESS.
BUT I AM HERE TO FIX THAT, AND FIX IT I SHALL. A LITTLE MAKE-UP AND A BIT OF CAFFEINE SHOULD GO A LONG WAY.

I'M *WAAAY* OUT OF MY ELEMENT HERE, ALFRED. HOBNOBBING WITH GOTHAM'S SOCIALITES ISN'T MY THING.
STATUS AND OPULENCE DOESN'T GIVE ONE SHARP TEETH.
THOUGH BEING INVITED TO THE ARKHAM RESEARCH BENEFIT MORE THAN QUALIFIES YOU AS ONE OF *THEM*.

WELL, THEY'LL HAVE TO SETTLE FOR A BIT OF *ACTING* ON MY PART.
QUITE. BUT DON'T WORRY, MASTER RICHARD. YOU WON'T BE PLAYING THE PART ALONE.
FLIK
NO?

I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF ACQUIRING SOMEONE TO ASSIST YOU IN KEEPING AN EYE ON *DR. TOMMY ELLIOT*...
...WHO NO DOUBT WILL BE LOOKING TO HAVE ADDITIONAL FUN WITH HIS CURRENT *CHARADE*.
WHAT'S HIS LONG-TERM ANGLE, IS WHAT I'D LIKE TO KNOW. IT CAN'T BE JUST TO BREAK BRUCE'S BANK.

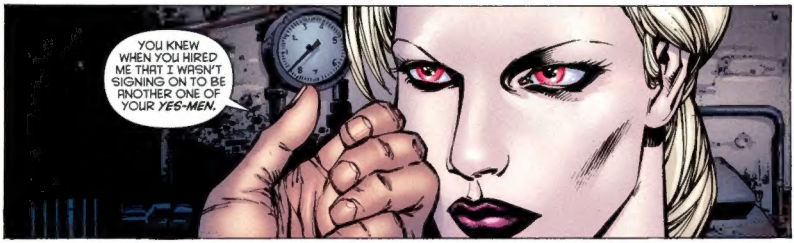
IT SEEMS "MASTER BRUCE" HAS BEEN INVITED TO JOIN THE *GOTHAM SHIELD COMMITTEE*...
...AN ELITE GROUP OF *EXPERTS* FORMED TO DISCUSS NEW IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE STABILITY OF OUR FAIR CITY.


HMM. COMMISSIONER GORDON, D.A. SPENCER, MAYOR HADY, DR. ARKHAM...AND, OF COURSE, BRUCE WAYNE.
AND THEY'LL ALL BE AT THE GALA TONIGHT.
GOOD TO KNOW. SO WHAT'S THIS ABOUT A *WINGMAN*?

DEVIL'S SQUARE, 100 FEET BELOW SEA LEVEL...
I REALLY WISH I COULD BE THERE WITH YOU TONIGHT... IT WOULDN'T BE TOO DIFFICULT...
DON'T BE *FOOLISH*, FRIGHT. I'LL BE IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO PEOPLE WHO THINK THEY *KNOW ME*. YOUR SKIN CONDITION WOULD BE A *DEAD GIVEAWAY*.

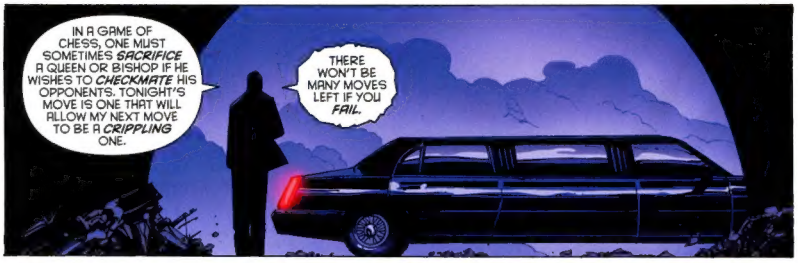
BUT I COULD BRING AN *INJECTION*. I CAN MAINTAIN THIS BEAUTY FOR *MOST* OF THE EVENING.
PLEASE TAKE ME, BLACK MASK. I *NEEEED* TO SEE YOU IN ACTION.

MY POOR, *LOVELY* LINDA. WE'LL HAVE NO MORE OF THIS JUVENILE PINING.
YOU SHOULD TAKE SOMETHING FOR YOUR NERVES. YOU'VE BEEN *JITTERY* LATELY. MORE SO THAN USUAL.


YOU KNEW WHEN YOU HIRED ME THAT I WASN'T SIGNING ON TO BE ANOTHER ONE OF YOUR *YES-MEN*.

NO. YOU'RE MY *DEVIL'S ADVOCATE*. YOU AREN'T AFRAID TO TELL ME WHAT YOU *REALLY THINK*. BUT I MUST STAY FOCUSED THIS EVENING. I HAVE TO BE...*MYSELF*.
THEN YOU MUST EXUDE CALMNESS. I'LL SEE THAT YOU DO...

YOU'VE BEEN RELYING ON YOUR UNDERLINGS TOO MUCH.
YOU TRUSTED ME TO WEAR THE MASK... WHY DOUBT ME NOW?
BECAUSE NOW WE ARE ON THE DEFENSIVE--UNLIKE OUR USUAL POSITION OF STRENGTH.


IN A GAME OF CHESS, ONE MUST SOMETIMES SACRIFICE A QUEEN OR BISHOP IF HE WISHES TO CHECKMATE HIS OPPONENTS. TONIGHT'S MOVE IS ONE THAT WILL ALLOW MY NEXT MOVE TO BE A CRIPPLING ONE.
THERE WON'T BE MANY MOVES LEFT IF YOU FAIL.

I HAVEN'T FAILED YET.

GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN. WE'LL CATCH UP SOON.
LIKEWISE, MR. MAYOR.

COMMISSIONER, D.A. SPENCER, NICE TO SEE YOU HERE.
AFTER WHAT WE'VE BEEN THROUGH THESE LAST FEW MONTHS, A GOOD PARTY IS WELL IN ORDER.
ENJOY. WE HAVE MUCH TO TALK ABOUT LATER.

A sea of diamonds and furs. They could've cancelled this shindig and put the money towards Arkham's New Asylum.
It's a wonder these events aren't targeted by thieves more often.
They rebuilt the Asylum quickly. "New and improved," they promise.
We'll see how improved it really is when they start transferring the big boys back from Blackgate Prison.
"Bruce Wayne" funded a large portion of the Asylum's new research wing. Money well spent, if it weren't really coming from Tommy Elliot.
And speaking of "wings"...
...here's mine, Helena Bertinelli, a.k.a. The Huntress.
PRETTY SWANKY, HUH?
THE PARTY? I SUPPOSE.
I MEANT THE DRESS. AND THANKS FOR GOING TO THE TROUBLE OF BUYING IT. OR IS IT ALFRED I SHOULD BE THANKING?
I THOUGHT WE WEREN'T GOING TO DRAW ATTENTION TO OURSELVES...
TRUST ME, WITH THIS CROWD--ANYTHING OFF THE RACK IS DRAWING ATTENTION.
SO WHERE'S OUR OLD FRIEND "BRUCE"?
OVER MY LEFT SHOULDER. TEN YARDS, TALKING TO THE GENE-CORE DOCTORS. THAT'S DOCTOR SINGH TOMMY IS TALKING TO--THEIR FOUNDER.
I'VE READ ABOUT HIM. HE SOMEHOW GOT THE FDA TO APPROVE HIS THERAPY FOR CLINICAL TRIALS IN ARKHAM.
IT'S ALL ABOUT THE BENJAMINS.

YOUR NEW RESEARCH WING HAS ME INTRIGUED, DR. SINGH. PARTICULARLY THE RADIO-WAVE TECHNOLOGY THAT'S SUPPOSED TO ZAP AWAY MENTAL ILLNESS.
WHAT'S IT CALLED AGAIN--? AH, YES. MENTAL DISTORTION THERAPY...
I'D BE HAPPY TO PROVIDE YOU WITH A PRIVATE TOUR OF GEN-CORE--
MY, MY, MR. WAYNE...

...YOUR PHILANTHROPIC SPENDING WILL LEAVE LITTLE FOR YOUR FUTURE.
WE'RE ATTEMPTING TO HAVE A CONVERSATION HERE, RIDDLER.

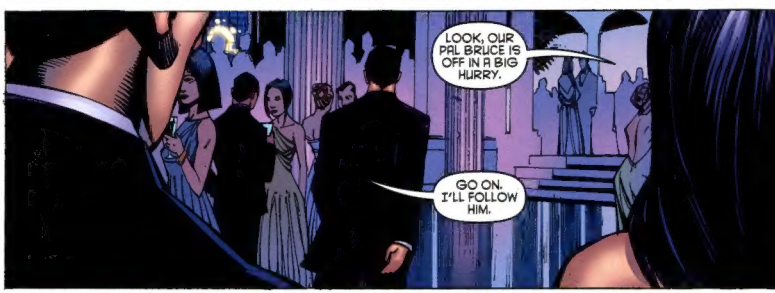
IT'S EDWARD NIGMA, PRIVATE EYE TO YOU, WAYNE. AND I'M JUST WONDERING IF YOU'LL HAVE ANYTHING LEFT--
--FOR WHEN YOU FINALLY SETTLE DOWN AND SPAWN YOUR OWN LITTLE RUGRATS?
WHAT BUSINESS IS IT OF YOURS?
IT'S NONE OF MY BUSINESS. NONE THAT I CAN RECALL WITH ACCURACY, ANYWAY.

THEN ASK ME WHEN YOU REMEMBER.

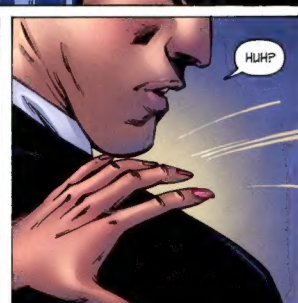
WHAT'S RIDDLER TALKING ABOUT?
BABIES?

GREAT. WHAT WE DON'T NEED IS ANOTHER *DISTRACTION* RIGHT NOW. NOT WITH *THEM* SQUIRMING THEIR WAY BACK INTO GOTHAM.
THE *FALCONES*. SO THEY'VE REALLY RETURNED.

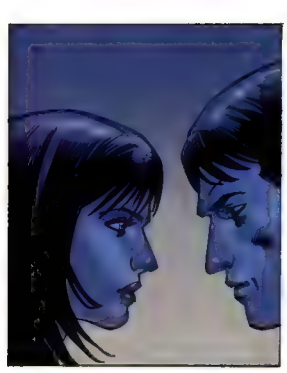
AND THEY'RE MOVING IN ON *BLACK MASK* WHILE HIS BACK'S AGAINST THE WALL. SEE IF YOU CAN MINGLE A BIT...
...MAYBE CHARM ONE OF THOSE LOWLIFES INTO TRYING TO IMPRESS YOU WITH LOOSE LIPS.
YOU FLATTER.


LOOK, OUR PAL BRUCE IS OFF IN A BIG HURRY.
GO ON. I'LL FOLLOW HIM.

Where'd he disappear to? Did he know I was following him?
QUICK!


HUH?

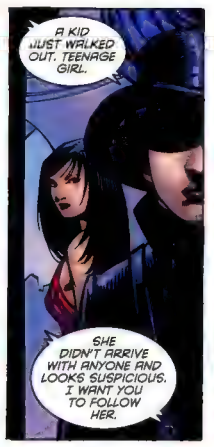
KISS ME, DANG IT.
HELEN-- MPHH!
MR. WAYNE, PLEASE--YOUR GENEROSITY HAS BEEN MORE THAN ENOUGH.
BUT I CAN DO SO MUCH MORE, JEREMIAH.
WE'RE ON THE GOTHAM SHIELD COMMITTEE TOGETHER. I JUST WANT TO HELP IN EVERY WAY POSSIBLE...
YOU'VE BEEN VERY HANDS-ON WITH ARKHAM'S NEW SECURITY MEASURES... WITHOUT YOU, THE ASYLUM WOULDN'T BE AHEAD OF SCHEDULE. I AM ETERNALLY GRATEFUL, BUT--
LISTEN-- I JUST LIKE TO SEE HOW MY MONEY IS BEING INVESTED.
THAT'S THE PROBLEM, MR. WAYNE--THIS ISN'T AN INVESTMENT. IT'S A DONATION.
PLEASE EXCUSE ME.



I BETTER HEAD BACK INSIDE--SOME, ER, *LOWLIFES* AWAIT...
UH... YEAH...

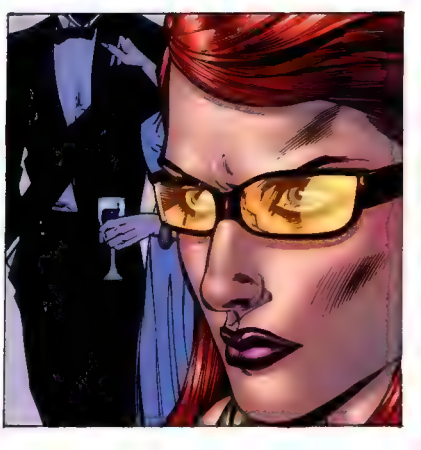
...THANKS FOR THINKING FAST...

HUNTRESS, SKIP THE *LOWLIFES* FOR A MINUTE.
ORACLE? YOU...YOU'RE CONNECTED? YOU'VE BEEN LISTENING?
DICK AND YOU BOTH HAVE AN OPEN LINE TO ME.
ORACLE, I--


A KID JUST WALKED OUT. TEENAGE GIRL.
SHE DIDN'T ARRIVE WITH ANYONE AND LOOKS SUSPICIOUS. I WANT YOU TO FOLLOW HER.

NOW--BEFORE SHE LOSES YOU!

CRAP. CRAP. CRAP. CRAP.



DRG!

YOU'RE BEING FOLLOWED, KITRINA.
LIKE I DON'T KNOW. AND DON'T TALK TO ME. YOU'RE RUINING MY INNER CHI.

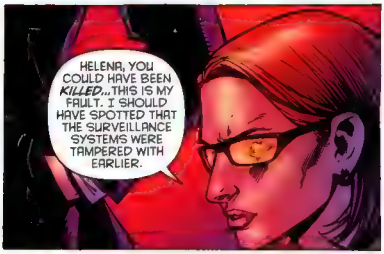
HEY—!
HIT THE ALARM! =COFF= =COFF=
TCCCCC

TWO GUARDS EQUALS CHILD'S PLAY.
PLAYTIME IS LATER. GET WHAT YOU CAME FOR. YOU DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME.

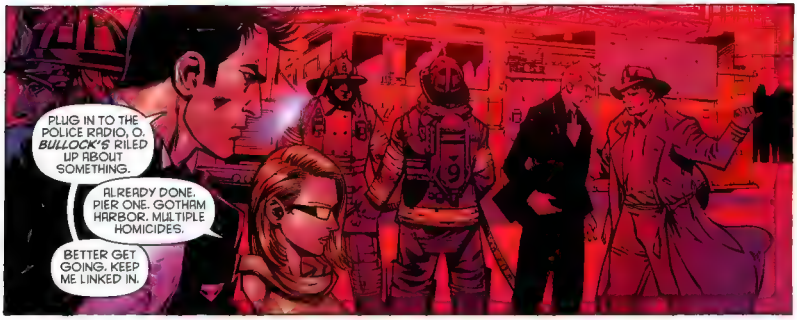
HUNTRESS, SHE'S TWENTY-THREE SECONDS AHEAD OF YOU. MY SURVEILLANCE SHOWS THAT A KEY CARD WAS USED IN THE ELEVATOR AND JUST AGAIN IN THE LAB ROOM.
SHE TOOK TWO GUARDS OUT WITH SOME KIND OF CHLORAL HYDRATE FORMULA--BUT IF SHE'S STILL IN THAT LAB, SHE'S ALL MINE.
SHE'LL BE OURS, YOUNG LADY. ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF--
I KNOW WHO YOU ARE, RIDDLER. BUT WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
MOI? WHY, FOLLOWING YOU. AND THE YOUNG LADY YOU'RE PURSUING. I'M A PRIVATE EYE, AFTER ALL.
AND I'M EYEING SOME SUSPECT GOINGS-ON AT THIS REGAL AFFAIR.
WHO HIRED YOU?
THAT'S FOR ME TO KN--
HEADS UP, KIDS. BOMB'S ABOUT TO--
BOOM

TEN MINUTES LATER...
WEEOOO WEEOOO
-:AGK:-
RR-MPH--
TWISTER OF TRUTHS... DASTARDLY DEFINER OF DEFINITION... KING OF CONTRADICTION... GRANDMASTER OF RIDDLES...

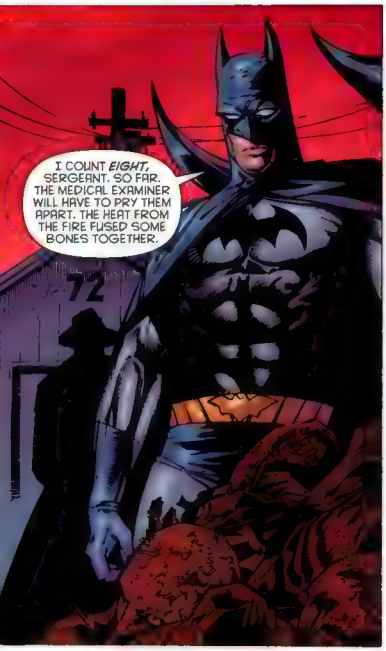
...I'M BARRRRRCK!
HEH HEH.


HELENA, YOU COULD HAVE BEEN KILLED...THIS IS MY FAULT. I SHOULD HAVE SPOTTED THAT THE SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS WERE TAMPERED WITH EARLIER.

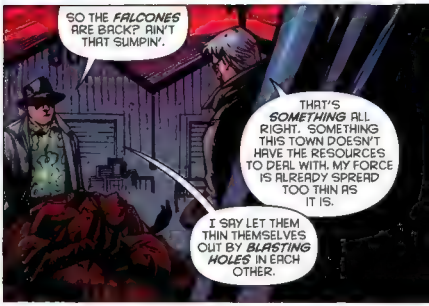
BARBARA, I'M FINE. I'VE RECEIVED WORSE BURNS FROM A TANNING BED.
THE RIDDLER MADE IT OUT ALIVE, BUT I'M NOT SO SURE ABOUT THE INTRUDER.
IF SHE MADE IT OUT, SHE'S PROBABLY LONG GONE. CHECK THE STREETS JUST TO BE SURE.
ON IT.


PLUG IN TO THE POLICE RADIO, O. BULLOCK'S RILED UP ABOUT SOMETHING.
ALREADY DONE. PIER ONE. GOTHAM HARBOR. MULTIPLE HOMICIDES.
BETTER GET GOING. KEEP ME LINKED IN.

GOTHAM HARBOR.
WELL, THE OTHER SHOE HAS DROPPED.
AND EVERY *OTHER* BODY PART. MUST'VE BEEN SOME *BONFIRE,* HUH? THERE'S LIKE, FIFTEEN--SIXTEEN BODIES IN THAT *HEAP.*


I COUNT *EIGHT,* SERGEANT. SO FAR. THE MEDICAL EXAMINER WILL HAVE TO PRY THEM APART. THE HEAT FROM THE FIRE FUSED SOME BONES TOGETHER.

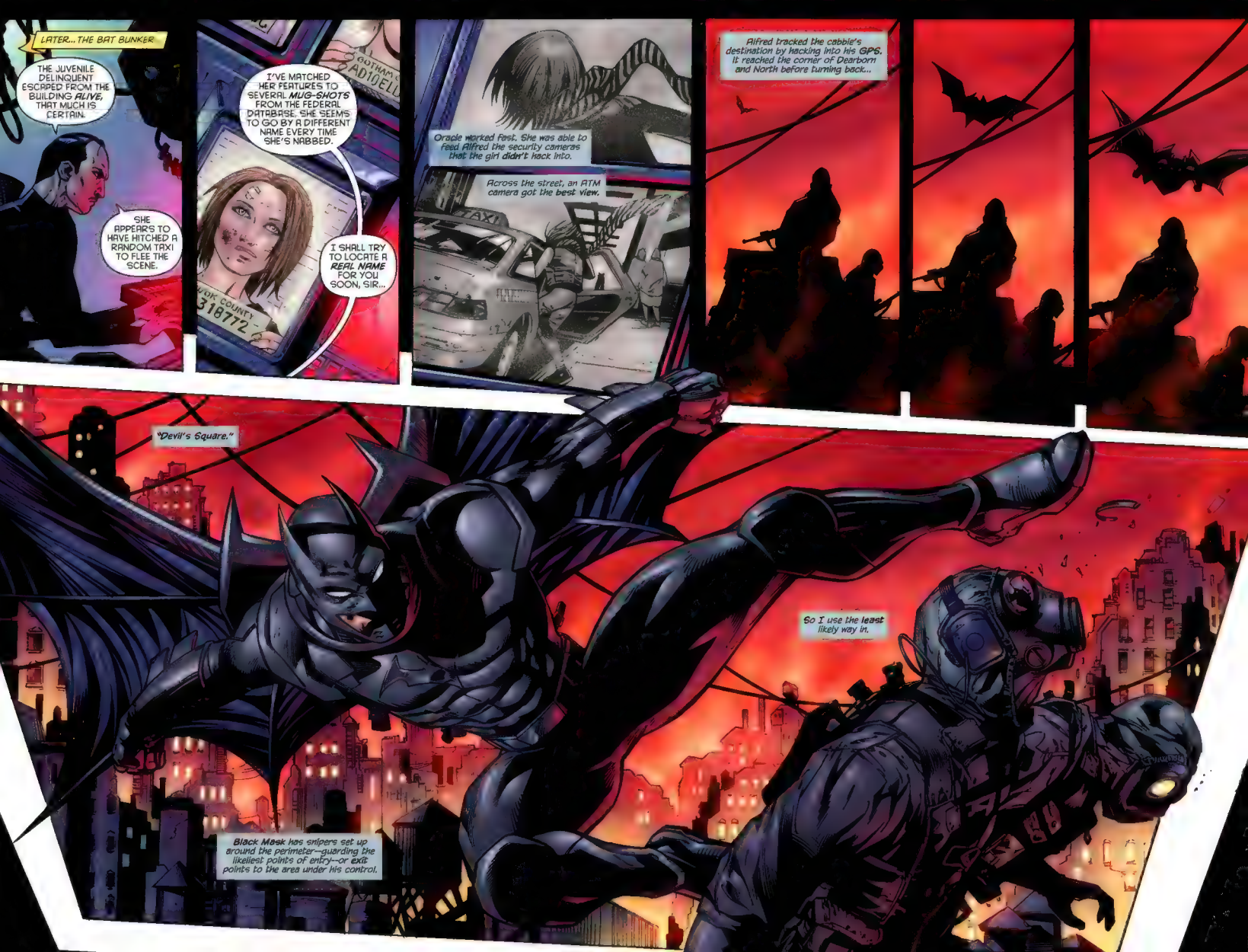
WHAT DO YOU THINK WENT DOWN HERE WITH FALCONE'S MEN, BATMAN?


SO THE *FALCONES* ARE BACK? AIN'T THAT SUMPIN'.
THAT'S *SOMETHING* ALL RIGHT. SOMETHING THIS TOWN DOESN'T HAVE THE RESOURCES TO DEAL WITH. MY FORCE IS ALREADY SPREAD TOO THIN AS IT IS.
I SAY LET THEM THIN THEMSELVES OUT BY *BLASTING HOLES* IN EACH OTHER.

FALCONE'S MEN DIDN'T STAND A CHANCE AGAINST WHOEVER *CUT* THEM UP.

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? THESE GUYS WERE CHOPPED UP, BUT *SURELY* THAT WAS DONE *AFTER*--

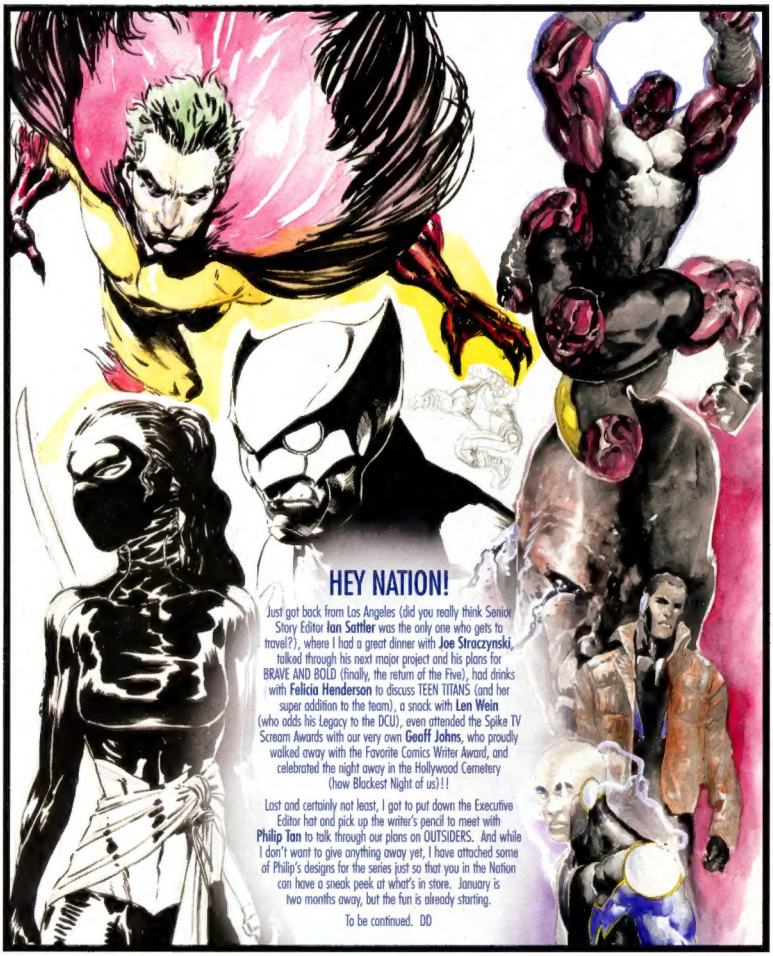
DAT'S NUTS. SWORDS AND BLADES DON'T STAND A CHANCE AGAINST THEM *TOMMY GUNS.* :-MUNCH:- :-MUNCH:-
THERE'S EVIDENCE OF ONLY *ONE* TYPE OF BULLET USED HERE AND THEY ALL CAME FROM FALCONE'S TOMMY GUNS. HAVE FORENSICS SWEEP THIS AREA FOR *TOXINS.*
BLACK MASK HAS RECRUITED *FREAKS* BEFORE. BUT FROM WHAT WE KNOW, MOST OF THEM SPLINTERED OFF OR WERE CAUGHT. SO WHO'S THIS ONE?
:-MUNCH:- :-MUNCH:- DON'T KNOW WHO'S OUT THERE WITH A *SWORD,* THOUGH.
NOT A SWORD. MORE LIKE A *SCYTHE.*
HMPH. HAVEN'T SEEN THAT IN A WHILE. NOT SINCE...
THE REAPER.


LATER... THE BAT BUNKER
THE JUVENILE DELINQUENT ESCAPED FROM THE BUILDING ALIVE, THAT MUCH IS CERTAIN.
SHE APPEARS TO HAVE HITCHED A RANDOM TAXI TO FLEE THE SCENE.
I'VE MATCHED HER FEATURES TO SEVERAL MUG-SHOTS FROM THE FEDERAL DATABASE. SHE SEEMS TO GO BY A DIFFERENT NAME EVERY TIME SHE'S NABBED.
I SHALL TRY TO LOCATE A REAL NAME FOR YOU SOON, SIR...
Oracle worked fast. She was able to feed Alfred the security cameras that the girl didn't hack into.
Across the street, an ATM camera got the best view.
Alfred tracked the cabbie's destination by hacking into his GPS. It reached the corner of Dearborn and North before turning back...
"Devil's Square."
So I use the least likely way in.
Black Mask has snipers set up around the perimeter—guarding the likeliest points of entry—or exit points to the area under his control.

I have an hour and a half of darkness left.
That's all I need to get started.
I take out three more False Faces in a four-block radius.
I make sure there's no one to sound any alarms—no one lurking in the shadows with a gun.
Black Mask has waged war on Gotham. A war I'm forced to fight the old-fashioned way...
HEY.

YO! IT'S THE BAT!
DAMN!
BETTER NOT TALK TO HIM, YO. THAT'S TROUBLE RIGHT THERE.
ANY OF YOU SEEN THIS GIRL AROUND?
BUT THAT'S THE BAT, WHAT'RE YOU 'FRAID OF?
YOU STICK AROUND AND TALK ALL YOU WANT, BABY D. GET YA'SELF KILLED.
SHOOT...NOBODY'S SCARIN' ME RIGHT NOW. YOU ALL CAN RUN.
YOU'VE SEEN HER--HAVEN'T YOU...?
SURE. SHE'S BEEN RIDIN' AROUND ON A TORE-UP MOPED. SEEN HER HANGIN' OUT WITH A BIG BLACK DUDE. WEAR'S A MUZZLE.
SHE DOIN' SOMETHIN' DOWN HERE. GONNA GET HERSELF KILLED. KNOW WHAT I'M SAYIN'?
PAATOOOOOOW
GUHH!

NOOOO!
UHNNN...
TO BE CONTINUED...



HEY NATION!

Just got back from Los Angeles (did you really think Senior Story Editor **Ian Sattler** was the only one who gets to travel?), where I had a great dinner with **Joe Straczynski**, talked through his next major project and his plans for BRAVE AND BOLD (finally, the return of the Five), had drinks with **Felicia Henderson** to discuss TEEN TITANS (and her super addition to the team), a snack with **Len Wein** (who adds his Legacy to the DCU), even attended the Spike TV Scream Awards with our very own **Geoff Johns**, who proudly walked away with the Favorite Comics Writer Award, and celebrated the night away in the Hollywood Cemetery (how Blackest Night of us)!!

Last and certainly not least, I got to put down the Executive Editor hat and pick up the writer's pencil to meet with **Philip Tan** to talk through our plans on OUTSIDERS. And while I don't want to give anything away yet, I have attached some of Philip's designs for the series just so that you in the Nation can have a sneak peek at what's in store. January is two months away, but the fun is already starting.

To be continued. DD

DC NATION

TEXT **DC NATION** TO **62407** TO GET THE LATEST DC UNIVERSE NEWS, ALERTS AND SPECIAL OFFERS! Standard carrier rates may apply.

DC COMICS DAN DIDIO, Senior VP-Executive Editor PAUL LEVITZ, President & Publisher GEORG BREWER, VP-Design & DC Direct Creative RICHARD BRUNING, Senior VP-Creative Director PATRICK CALDON, Executive VP-Finance & Operations CHRIS CARAMALIS, VP-Finance JOHN CUNNINGHAM, VP-Marketing TERRI CUNNINGHAM, VP-Managing Editor MARILYN DRUCKER, VP-Brand Management AMY GENKINS, Senior VP-Business & Legal Affairs ALISON GILL, VP-Manufacturing DAVID HYDE, VP-Publicity HANK KANALZ, VP-General Manager, WildStorm JAY KOGAN, VP-Business & Legal Affairs/Deputy General Counsel JIM LEE, Editorial Director-WildStorm GREGORY NOVECK, Senior VP - Creative Affairs RICH PALERMO, VP-Business & Legal Affairs/Deputy General Counsel RON PERAZZA, VP-Creative Services SUE POHJA, VP - Book Trade Sales STEVE ROTTERDAM, Senior VP-Sales & Marketing CHERYL RUBIN, Senior VP-Brand Management ALYSSE SOLL, VP-Advertising & Custom Publishing, JEFF TROJAN, VP-Business Development, DC Direct BOB WAYNE, VP-Sales

SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE Certified Fiber Sourcing

Fiber used in this product line meets the sourcing requirements of the SFI program. www.sfiprogram.org PWC-SFIOC-260

BATMAN 693. January, 2010. Published monthly by DC Comics, 1700 Broadway, New York, NY 10019. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to BATMAN, DC Comics Subscriptions, P.O. Box 308, Congers, NY 10920. Annual subscription rate (12 issues) $30.00. Canadian subscribers must add $12.00 for postage and GST. GST # is R125921072. All foreign countries must add $12.00 for postage. U.S. funds only. Copyright © 2010 DC Comics. All Rights Reserved. All characters featured in this issue, the distinctive likenesses thereof and related elements are trademarks of DC Comics. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. DC Comics does not read or accept unsolicited submissions of ideas, stories or artwork. This book is manufactured at a facility holding chain-of-custody certification. This paper is made with sustainably managed North American fiber.
Printed by World Color Press, Inc., Montreal, QC, Canada. 11/04/09.

DC Comics, a Warner Bros. Entertainment Company

GREEN
GIANT
DCP